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ABSTRACT

This biographical sketch of Barton Warren Stone, an early American advocate of the Restoration Movement, describes and interprets some of the innate and environmental factors that must have been to a large measure responsible for his leadership of what has been called the largest indigenous American religious movement. It details some of the political, philosophic, and theological contexts of the early eighteenth century in which Stone's movement developed. It describes Stone as one who had a reputation among his contemporaries as a scholar, teacher, theologian, editor, writer, and evangelist whose chief claim to uniqueness as a religious leader lay in his definition and interpretation of the New Testament basis of Christian unity and fellowship. It describes the thesis of Christian unity as being the major emphasis of Stone's life and work. (TJ)

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Barton Warren Stone: An American Religious Movement

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BARTON WARREN STONE: AN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

It has become axiomatic among speech educators that the personality or character of an individual is a powerful means of persuasion.[1] As this is doubtlessly the case, a study of Barton Warren Stone as he influenced individuals by speech must attempt to discover and interpret the innate and the environmental factors which must have been to a large measure responsible for his leadership of what William Warren Sweet has called the largest indigenous American religious movement.

Religious movements usually have their roots in the past. The Restoration Movement[2] of which Barton Warren Stone was one of the earliest American advocates,[3] is no exception. It is therefore necessary to

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[1]No doubt this is due to the high respect accorded to the statement by Aristotle: "The character of the speaker is a cause of persuasion when the speech is so uttered as to make him worthy of belief; . . . We might almost affirm that his character (ethos) is the most potent of all the means of persuasion." The Rhetoric of Aristotle, Translated by Lane Cooper (D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1932), pp. 8-9.

[2]Luther attempted to "reform" an existing institution. Experience had shown that he succeeded only in establishing an institution which was itself subject to "reform." Stone and his associates thought that an attempt to "restore" the church to its original condition as set forth in the New Testament was much more in harmony with the teaching of the Scriptures. Thus they called their work a "restoration movement" rather than a reformation.

[3]As nearly as discernible, the issuing by Stone and his co-workers of The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery, in June 1804, marks the beginning of the formation of independently organized churches after the pattern which they discovered in the New Testament. Two later adherents of the movement were Thomas Campbell, who came to America in 1807, and his son, Alexander, who came in 1809. Thomas Campbell issued his Declaration and Address September 7, 1809. The movement led by Stone and that led by the two Campbells joined forces in 1832.

examine the roots of this movement in order to interpret intelligently the events that sprang from them.

Barton Warren Stone was born in a century when revolutionary thinking was the rule rather than the exception. The sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries produced at least two great political revolutions and numerous religious upheavals, which though geographically an ocean apart, were causally related. As a historian of the period has said: "The challenge that was thrown at authoritarianism in politics and economics was thrown also at the established churches."[4] Social conditions which produced in politics philosophic liberals such as Voltaire, Rousseau and Locke, also begot religious revolutionaries like the Wesleys, Jonathan Edwards, and George Whitefield. Men were beginning to break with traditionalisms and to think for themselves. Before and concurrently with Luther's substitution of "the double authority of the Bible and private conscience"[5] for the authority of the church, many "left wing" religious groups[6] were attempting to be free from authoritarian religion.

In view of the foregoing evidence and of much more which remains unmentioned, it will be safe to say that these "reformers" were focus-

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[4]Michael Kraus, The Atlantic Civilization: Eighteeth Century Origins (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1949), p. 46.

[5]Ernest Sutherland Bates, American Faith (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1940), p. 46.

[6]Some of these groups were: The Hussites, Lollards, Albigensians, Waldensians, and Anabaptists. Bates, loc. cit. These groups stood for separation of church and state, and opposed war, oaths, capital punishment, infant baptism and ecclesiastical ceremonies, Ibid., p. 56.

ing strong social trends and giving direction to forces which preceded and succeeded them. The medieval world with feudalism premeating all of its social institutions was disintegrating. The wide range of activity is demonstrated by remembering some of the world shaking events which were taking place.

> Luther was nine years old when Columbus discovered America. On that day when he faced the Emperor of Worms, Ponce de Leon was in Florida seeking the fountain of eternal youth, and Magellan was in the Antipodes on the first circumnavigation of the globe. When Luther was fourteen Vasco da Gamma rounded the Cape of Good Hope, sailed up the eastern coast of Africa and, crossing the Indian ocean to Calicut, solved the major commercial problem of the time--how to get directly to the East. The resultant possibilities of worldwide commerce changed the whole economic situation. . . alongside the traditional princes of state and of the church a new princedom emerged--the wealthy merchants. The medieval trading cities, with their guild organizations of artisans, lost their grip, and the guild system disintegrated.[7]

The lower classes began to see, in the changes around them, the possibility of economic liberation from secular and religious lords. This ferment was not just of the peasants; it began to undermine the entire existing social order. The divine right of kings superseded the feudal order and Spain, France and England emerged as powerful monarchies. As a consequence of the development of powerful secular authority in the king and his ministers, conflicts arose between the king and the traditional religious authority, the Pope.

Concurrently with the social changes came an intellectual revolution represented by the discoveries of such men as Copernicus, Newton,

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[7]Harry Emerson Fosdick, Great Voices of the Reformation, an Anthology (New York: Random House, 1952), pp. xiv, xv.

and Galileo; the fall of Constantinople resulting in the fleeing of the learned Greeks to the West; and the subsequent rise of Humanism. "A reformation was inevitable, and the only question was whether it would be achieved by the church itself without disruption or would cause a split, rending Christendom asunder."[8]

By the time the Reformation had sufficiently progressed, on the Continent of Europe and in the British Isles, to insure the separate existence of Anglicanism, Presbyterianism, and Separatism; "feudalism had already blurred the old immutable distinctions of social status."[9] It was the possibility of men to change their class which decreased interest in class and allowed the development of interest in men as individuals. The latter development came into its own in a new world where there was no traditional political, social, or religious institutionalism to claim one's loyalty. Thus it is quite possibly a fact as Bates would have it that,

> None of the great ideals implicit in the Reformation had come to full fruition at the time the American colonies were settled. Freedom of conscience was recognized even formally only in Holland; separation of church and state nowhere existed; government by consent and cooperation, in either religion or politics was still in its infancy; personal liberty and social equality were only dreams. These the radical master ideas of the Reformation born in and of it, existed in theory but without practical application when they were brought to America. It was America's function to give them that application, to develop them much further, than was done elsewhere and to make them eventually the basis of a national faith.[10]

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[8] Ibid., p. xviii.

[9] Bates, op. cit., p. 78.

[10] Ibid., pp. 78, 79.

As one turns his eyes toward America it becomes apparent that the Reformation here, as in Europe, took the form of adapting old religious institutions to new contingencies. As Andrews[11] says: "The men who founded the colonies were Englishmen, the incentives that impelled them to migrate were English in their origin, and the forms of colonial life and government they set up were reproductions or modifications of institutions already established and conditions already prevailing in one way or another at home."

Modern history does not bear out the tradition that all who came to America from Europe were interested in insuring a political condition where all would be free to worship God according to the dictates of individual conscience.[12]

One may safely say that the battleground of the Reformation shifted, upon its decline in Europe and England,[13] to American soil.[14]

Developing concurrently with the concern for reformation of religious institutions and practices, which evidently concerned the masses, was the concern of a comparative minority of intellectuals with a re-emphasis upon human values and science. The upheaval in the thought

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[11]Charles M. Andrews, Our Earliest Colonial Settlements (New York: New York University Press, 1933), p. v.

[12]This idea is implicit through Andrews' book. Ibid. Also see J. Franklin Jameson, The Revolution Considered As A Social Movement (New York: Peter Smith, 1950), pp. 90, 91.

[13]Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, The Puritan Oligarchy (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 26.

[14]Bates, loc. cit.

processes of men is apparent in many directions. The discovery of the new world with all its promises of economic independence tended to stress secular values.[15] Men began to probe into the nature of mind and matter as they could be utilized for comfort and convenience. When Bacon issued his Advancement of Learning in 1620 and "cast the light of induction into the obscurity of philosophy. . . The tocsin of a new day was rung."[16] The poet, Milton, argued against authoritarian censorship when he said, "To the pure all things are pure . . . knowledge cannot defile, nor consequently the books, if the will and conscience be not defiled. . . Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience above all liberties."[17] In this age of "Englightement" came to prominence the names of Newton, Locke, Harvey, Descartes, Leibnitz, Galileo, da Vinci, Copernicus, Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, Condorcet, Montesquieu, and Benjamin Franklin. The year 1660 saw the organization of the Royal Society; 1666 of the French Academy of Science; and 1727 of Franklin's Junto. Far from being opponents of the advance of learning, the New England theologians were stirred by it and contributed to it. Edwards is said to have been as "profound a believer in reason and science

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[15]For a discussion of the influence of Calvin and his theology upon economics see Ibid., pp. 68-71. The economic motive for colonization has been stressed by most of the more recent historians who have written on the Colonial period.

[16]Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, The Rise of American Civilization (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1931), I. p. 152.

[17]John Milton, "Areopogitica" in The Student Milton (New York: F. S. Crofts, 1933), pp. 737, 750.

as any 18th Century rationalist.[18] Perry Miller says Edwards was "incapable of accepting Christianity and physics on separate premises" and that "with him there could be no warfare between religion and science, or between ethics and nature."[19] That Edwards was not the only New England minister who fell under the influence of the Renaissance is indicated by the books then being read by them. In Literary Culture in Early New England, T. G. Wright[20] indicates that if one had visited the home of a Massachusetts minister in the seventeeth century, he would have found among the books in his library such titles as:

> Francis Bacon"s Natural History and his De Argumentationes Scientiarum, Newton's Principia Mathematica, Naturalis Philosophiae, Optics and Astronomy; Boyle's Philosophical Essays, Natural Philosophy, Experiments Physio-Mechanical Touching The Air, of Forms and Qualities; Halley's Synopsis of Comets; Hugenius' Discovery of Coelestial Worlds; Keplers' On The Loadstone; and Hevelius Machinae, Coelestis and Cometographia.

New England institutions, churches, libraries, schools, and the press reflected the new and wide variety of intellectual interests and all the new streams of influence.[21] Doubtless the revivalists did not appreciate what might come as a result of the techniques they had used in trying to convert the sinner. The evangelists' methods and intentions are ably summarized in the following quotation:

> That technique consisted in arousing in the breast of the sinner an agonized feeling of utter unworthiness combined with a mounting terror of eternal torture until at lass the unbearable

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[18]Bates, op. cit., p. 209.

[19]Perry Miller, Jonathan Edwards (William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1949), p. 72.

[20]Quoted in Wertenbaker, op. cit., p. 260.

[21]For a discussion of the influence of the new thought on the schools, press and libraries see Beard, op. cit., pp. 170-188.

> emotion would break in surrender of the individual consciousness to the common will, accompanied by a sense of release and purgation, all easily interpreted as a belated reception of the Grace of God. This was the immediate effect sought by the evangelists, but the permanent effect was quite different. They had suddenly converted a multitude of sinners into a body of the elect. These newly sanctified souls, conscious of an immediate personal relationship with God, were less likely than before to submit to clerical advice or ecclesiastical discipline.[22]

The new feelings of independence thus gained by their conversion was one of the unforeseen results of the revival: It ". . . increased dissent from the regular churches and either brought on or hastened many schisms and controversies."[23] The dissent was further evident when the political battle cry, then becoming current, "No taxation without representation," was easily applied by the small sects to the established churches.[24]

Doubtless the growing secularism of America was becoming apparent to the spiritual leaders. The clergy perhaps also could anticipate the threat to their heretofore unrivalled political leadership. At least two possibilities were open for meeting this threat: they could react against it (as the strict Calvinists did) or they could adapt themselves to it. The cleavage which developed later between persons holding these opposite views is suggested by Jonathan Edwards' attempt, in 1742 when the awakening had subsided in Northampton, to get the people to draw up a New Covenant. Not only did the people, in a consuming rage,

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[22]Bates, op. cit., p. 216.

[23]Wesley M. Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1930), p. 9.

[24]Bates, op. cit., p. 217.

refuse, they ran Johnathan Edwards out of Northampton and the pulpit he had occupied for twenty-three years.[25] Miller suggests that among other things this event was a dramatization of the conflict between". . . American's greatest spokesman for absolute Christian morality and representatives of the American business ethic."[26] The forces of materialism were in such ascendancy as to be able to compete with spiritual forces that had prevailed under the encouragement of law in earlier America. American life of the late seventeenth and of the eighteenth centuries, commercial, governmental, and intellectual was dominated by England. Ideas, especially Deism, from across the Atlantic, left deep impressions upon the people. The roots of Deism lay deep in the Humanism of the Renaissance and the Englightenment in the expansion of Europe geographically and economically, and in the thinking and writing of a rising new class of scientists and philosophers.

Heretical sects had arisen giving emphasis to the doctrine of the sacredness of the individual conscience and stressing the rational in Christianity. Arminians arose who denied Calvin's doctrine of predestination and total hereditary depravity; and asserted that faith must be demonstrated through good works before justification could be assured.

In New England a type of liberal thought appeared in Arminianism, Socinianism, and Arianism; and New England intellectuals like Charles Chauncy and Ebenezer Gay discarded traditional religion for Deism.

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[25]Miller, op. cit., p. 210.

[26]Bates, op. cit., p. 219.

The complete denial of Christian revelation appeared, natively, perhaps first in the educational institutions such as William and Mary, Harvard, Yale, and even the stronghold of orthodox Presbyterianism, Princeton.

The leaders of thought during the approximately twenty years when American political philosophy was developing, were discreet Deists, influenced by the French Enlightenment. These leaders were discreet in the fact that they with Benjamin Franklin regarded Christianity as necessary for the inculcation of morality in the lower classes. During and following the Revolution, Freethinkers and Deists, emboldened by success, preached their doctrines openly and published books and tracts in behalf of their ideas.

The clergy, alarmed by the spread of infidelity, arose to the occasion, and, using their pulpits, tracts and books, decried the influence of the Englightenment and gave as an example of its effect France's Reign of Terror. They also began a religious revival which eventually regained even the strongholds of freethought, Deism and rationalism. Barton Warren Stone lived during one of the most virulent and interesting periods of American history. As a lad he felt his pulse throb in response to slogans and shibboleths such as have had a part in the building of any nation. He said, "From my earliest recollection, I drank deeply into the spirit of liberty and . . . was warmed by the soul inspiring draught. . . ." The ideologies, now in the forefront, concerning freedom of religion and the emphasis upon the worth of the individual gained a sympathetic hearing from Stone. While many were engaged in applying these concepts to civil, political, and economic institutions; Barton Stone was attempting to adapt the principles to existing religious institutions. The feeling of liberty and in-

dependence gave him courage, once his mind was made up, to repudiate "orthodox old world Calvinism."[27] This expression shows his feeling that Calvinism was out of keeping with democratic principles which should prevail in the "New World." This thinking caused him to grasp fervently the doctrine "God is Love," as preached by William Hodge,[28] who was a leading force in Stone's first religious impressions. Stone was one of the first of his generation to establish an analogy between liberation from political bondage to Britain and spiritual bondage to traditional Calvinism which taught that man was "utterly indisposed, disabled, and wholly inclined to all evil."[29] Stone, in opposition, later taught that men "possess rational faculties, capable of knowing and enjoying God."[30] This doctrine constituted much of the preaching of the Great Revival, in which Stone had a prominent part.[31] To

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[27]John Rogers, The Biography of Barton Warren Stone Written by Himself: with additon and reflection by Elder John Rogers (Cincinnati: J.A. and U. P. James, 1847), p. 3.

[28]William Hodge was one of the voices of the Great Revival in in North Carolina and later in Kentucky.

[29]The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America containing the Confession of Faith, the catechisms, the Government and Discipline and the Directory for the Worship of God (Philadelphia: Thomas Bradford, 1792), p. 11.

[30]Robert Marshall, Barton W. Stone, and John Thompson, An Apology for Renouncing the jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky To Which is Added a Compendious View of the Gospel, and a Few Remarks on the Confession of Faith (Lexington: Joseph Charless, 1804).

[31]Richard McNemar, The Kentucky Revival (Cincinnati: V. W. Browne, 1807, reprinted New York: Edward O. Jenkins, 1846), p. 27.

Stone "Calvinism" was but a transposition into religion of the principles of autocracy and exclusiveness which were, in his mind, inseparably connected with the politics of "Toryism." That the Campbell-Stone movement stood for principles in religion which emphasized the dignity and worth, in the eyes of God, of every man, was probably not one of the least of the factors which resulted in its rapid growth in the West.

The converts made by Stone, the preachers and others whom he schooled, and his religious doctrines, including the repudiation of Calvinism, exerted powerful influences upon the lives of thousands who settled the West. Stone's chief claim to uniqueness as a religious leader lies in his definition and interpretation of the New Testament basis of Christian unity and fellowship. According to his contemporaries Stone enjoyed a reputation as a scholar, as a teacher, as a theologian, as an editor and writer, and as an evangelist.

The pivot of the reform movement for the first half of the nineteenth century was in central Kentucky. It is no mere coincidence that Stone's greatest evangelistic activity took place during the same period and in the same geographic area. For a time he was the sole preacher advocating the reform principles in Kentucky. He preached day and night to promote them. He was in much demand as a preacher, and his other interests, farming, teaching, etc., always came second to evangelism.

Stone's preaching was one of the principal factors in the establistment and growth of the Christian Church, or Churches of Christ, during the early period. He divided his time between evangelistic meetings and the work of a regular "located" minister. Traveling on

horseback, he held protracted meetings in southern Ohio and Indiana, middle and eastern Tennessee and Kentucky. While serving as a regular minister, he built large memberships for churches in Cane Ridge, Concord, Lexington, and Georgetown, Kentucky, By 1832, when Stone moved from Kentucky to Illinois, the movement was well on the way to becoming the fastest growing religious group in America.

Stone was educated at David Caldwell's Guilford Academy in North Carolina. Caldwell was one of the Presbyterian Missionaries, principally Princeton graduates, who had come to North Carolina in the first half of the eighteenth century to gather scattered families of their faith into churches, and by the side of the churches to plant classical schools.[32]

Stone had the classical course of study typical of the "log college" which was closely patterned after that of the College of New Jersey (Princeton).[33]

At the time Stone went to Guilford Academy, preaching in the area was under the influence of the Second Great Awakening. Much of the impetus of this movement in Virginia and North Carolina was gained at the hands of the Presbyterian Missionaries who in turn had been influenced by Whitefield and the Wesleys.[34] These Presbyterian preachers were emphasizing the revival doctrines of "grace" preached

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[32]E. W. Caruthers, The Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D. (Greensborough: Swain & Sherwood, 1840) p. 6.

[33]Evan Ulrey, The Preaching of Barton Warren Stone (Baton Rouge, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1955) pp. 39-50.

[34]See Eugene E. White, The Preaching of George Whitefield During The Great Awakening in America (Baton Rouge: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1947).

by Whitefield, as well as his teaching concerning the "New Birth". Through the peculiarity of these doctrines, their proponents began to be known as "New Lights" or "New Side" Presbyterians. Almost every contact Stone had with Presbyterian theology was with men of this liberal or "New Light" element. North Carolina Presbyterianism in its more agressive element had been strongly influenced by the new revival principles.[35]

Caldwell, Stones mentor, was himself one of the New Lights. Stone's conversion resulted from the efforts of James McGready and William Hodge, both New Light liberals. His examination for licensure was by Henry Pattillo, a leading spirit in North Carolina Presbyterianism, perhaps the most liberal of all. Hope Hull, a prominent figure in Georgia Methodism[36] and John Springer another New Light Presbyterian were strong influences on Stone. Stone went often to hear Springer preach at Liberty in a building erected by cooperative effort of all the religious groups in the community, because Springer's preaching was ". . . very acceptable to serious people of all denominations".[37] Hope Hull, John Springer and James McGready with other

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[35]Emphasis on "revival principles" which were arminian rather than calvinist ultimately resulted in the formation of the Cumberland Presbyterian church. Williams Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, The Presbyterians (New York: Harper Brothers, 1936), p. 90.

[36]G. G. Smith, History of Georgia Methodism 1786 to 1866 (Atlanta: A. B. Caldwell, 1913, p. 36.

[37]Rogers, Ibid, p. 15.

revival men of the Carolinas, translated the Second Great Awakening, which had begun in New England and spread to Virginia and Carolina, into the Great Revival of the early west. Some have regarded the Second Great Awakening and the Great Revival as spontaneous movements having the same fundamental causes.[38] At any rate Stone's later activity in the Great Revival had its roots in his contacts with Methodists and New Side Presbyterians.

Stone moved west with the frontier and was among the first evangelists who preached in the early settlements of Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois and Missouri. He personally witnessed the impact upon frontier life of the American Revolution, the rise of American nationalism, and of Jacksonian Democracy. Calvinism was the traditional theology of most of the American churches at the time Stone was born. That Calvinism failed to conquer the western frontier was due, at least in part, to the fact that the frontiersman was blatantly disrespectful of traditionalism, whether in politics or in religion. Stones repudiation of Calvinist theology and his concurrent acceptance of the Biblical doctrine that all men, not just the Calvinist "elect", could be saved if they so desired, came as an indirect result of his hatred of political and religious autocracy. Barton Warren Stone made a unique contribution to the life of those who attempt to predicate their faith exclusively upon Biblical evidence. He effectively advocated this great Restoration principle, in the face of determined opposition by Calvinist preachers, before

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[38]Alice Felt Tyler, Freedoms Ferment (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1944).

any other man now generally associated with the Restoration Movement. In 1800 while preaching to churches at Cane Ridge and Concord, Kentucky, he said:

> From reading and meditating upon it, I became convinced that God did love the whole world, and that the reason why he did not save all, was because of their unbelief; and that the reason why they believed not, was not because God did not exert his physical, almighty power in them to make them believe, but because they neglected and received not his testimony, given in the Word concerning his Son. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing, ye might have life in his name." I saw that the requirement to believe in the Son of God, was reasonable; because the testimony given was sufficient to produce faith in the sinner; and the invitations and encouragement of the Gospel were sufficient, if believed, to lead him to the Savior, for the promised Spirit, salvation and eternal life.
>
> This glimpse of faith--of truth, was the first divine ray of light, that ever led my distressed, perplexed mind from the labyrinth of Calvinism and error, in which I had so long been bewildered.[39]

From the Biblical principle of "Faith cometh of hearing and hearing of the Word of God," Stone's discovery of New Testament truth progressed rapidly in spite of rigorous opposition by some who had been his close friends and associates.

The most severe limitation upon the influence of Stone's thinking is the general unavailability of his most important work: the fourteen volumes of The Christian Messenger published 1826-1844. It is in the Christian Messenger that we will find what Stone believed and taught.[40] The only interpretations of Stone that have been published in this century develop the thesis that Christian unity was the major emphasis of Stone's life and work.[41] I believe this is the correct thesis.

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[39]Rogers, Ibid, p. 33.

[40]Even the usually thorough Perry Miller depended upon secondary sources such as biographies for his estimates of the influence of Stone. Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. 1965), pp. 6, 23.

[41]See for example A. W. Fortune, The College of the Bible Quarterly, November, 1922, July, 1941, and Colby D. Hall, The New Light Christians, (Fort Worth: Stafford and London, 1959).

Stone himself enunciated his ideal repeatedly in the Christian Messenger, especially in the series of sermons on Christian Union.[42]

Stone could practice the principles of Christian unity which he enunciated. Without the self-effacing attitude of Stone it is doubtful that the union of Campbell and Stone forces (approximately equal in number) in the winter of 1831-32 would have been accomplished.[43] Stone viewed the union as the noblest act of his life.[44] It may well have been his noblest act for the best test of one's advocacy of Christian unity is his ability to practice it. We all know that the opinions of others should not be made tests of fellowship; but do I know equally well that my opinion should not be made such a test? Stone knew it and practiced it not once but repeatedly.

Stone's "polar star" was Christian unity; but his advocacy was of union on Bible principles. He envisioned the union of all Christinas in the body of Christ. He was not blinded to the fact that there would be different opinions but he was sure that these should be kept to one's self as personal, and should never become the basis of a faction. He voiced his conviction that all doctrines should be "brought to the Bible" to be tested. He also said:

> We must believe that the Bible was addressed to rational creatures and designed by God to be understood for their profit. But believing it was written for our hearing and profit, and therefore addressed to our understanding, we are encouraged to read and diligently search its sacred pages. The man who does this, with

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[42] Christian Messenger, XI, 1841.

[43] See letter to Campbell from Elders and Deacons in the Church at Leesburg, Kentucky. Also letter form John T. Johnston to Campbell in Stone, Ibid, pp. 344-346.

[44] Rogers, Ibid, p. 79

> prayerful attention to its instructions, will find the truth, and walking in it, will find her ways pleasantness and all her paths peace . . . Were we all thus prepared, and were we in this spirit to read the Bible, great and glorious would be the effects--How soon would the divided flock of the great shepherd hear his voice and flow together unto him![45]

It is not difficult to imagine that if today all professed Christians were of like spirit with Stone, the actual union of Christians could be accomplished; for his spirit radiates the spirit of Christ.

Did he envision a national, or international or ecumenical body or federation of Christians? He obviously did not. His spirit was as broad as the scriptures but not broader. He would co-operate and fellowhsip on the truth of scriptures but he would also love and cultivate and woo those who disagree with him.

Barton Warren Stone was an excellent student of scripture and possessed a rare ability to express ideas in clear language free of pretentious devices. In fact, many articles in the Christian Messenger could be printed in our religious periodicals today without sounding dated or archaic.

We would not always be able to agree with all of the conclusions which Stone reached from his study of the Scriptures. Almost all would agree that his approach to the study of scripture was sound and that he was correct in his insistence that Christian unity, if truly Christian, must be based upon belief and practice of the teachings of Christ in the New Testament and that such unity begins with the individual's faith and practice. Stone led the way for us in personal piety, in faithful study, and in ability to practice the principles of Christian love and forbearance.

Stone was born in Maryland in 1772 when American political freedom

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[45]Christian Messenger, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 4.

was being wrested from Great Britain. He heard the guns of Generals Green and Cornwallis at the battle of Guilford Court House. Stone's entire life was spent in the struggle to free himself and his fellow men from religious slavery. He was able to throw off completely the bonds of Calvinism which was a dominant force in his day. He, as much as any man in America, was responsible for exposing the un-Biblical features of the Calvinistic system of theology which had dominated religious thought in early America. He appreciated his political liberty, but more than that, he appreciated and used his religious freedom to help others to enjoy the freedom of "gospel liberty."

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